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# ENG 3402-001: Methods of Teaching Literature in Secondary Schools

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**English 3402: Methods of Teaching Literature in Secondary Schools**

Dr. Robin L. Murray

Spring 2004, Tuesday from 6-8:30

Office: CH 3351/314F

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**Course Description:**

This course explores various approaches to the study of literature in the secondary schools. Class time will primarily be devoted to your responses to readings from the texts, professional journals, and your own research.

**Texts:**

Moore, John Noelle. *Interpreting Young Adult Literature: Literary Theory in the Secondary Classroom*. Portsmouth, NH: Boynton/Cook Publishers, 1997.

Erickson. *Teaching Reading in High School English Classes*.

Oliver, Eileen Iscoff. *Crossing the Mainstream: Multicultural Perspectives in Teaching Literature*. Urbana: NCTE, 1994.

Smagorinski, Peter. *Teaching English through Principled Practice*. Columbus: Merrill/Prentice Hall, 2002.

**Course Objectives: Upon completion of this course the teacher-candidate will**

1. understand the roles that literature can play in the secondary curriculum,
2. understand that students vary in their approaches to learning and, when teaching literature, create instructional opportunities that are adaptable to individual differences of learners,
3. recognize the importance of including a variety of literary genres in literary study,
4. use a variety of instructional strategies, when teaching literature, to encourage students' development of critical thinking, problem solving, and performance skills and effective use of technology,
5. recognize issues surrounding the "canon" and what they imply about the literature included in the secondary classroom,
6. know and be able to implement procedures for handling potential censorship issues,
7. understand and use a variety of assessment strategies, when teaching literature, to evaluate and modify the teaching/learning process,
8. be aware of and able to implement a variety of culturally diverse literatures in the secondary classroom,
9. be aware of a variety of young adult literature and arguments for and against its use in the secondary classroom,
10. be familiar with a variety of resource materials available to the literature teacher.

**Course Requirements (All must be completed to receive credit):**

1. **Response Statements and quizzes.** These are about two pages typed and reflect careful reading and synthesis of course materials. Your responses will serve as a source for discussion in class as a whole or in small groups. Some of your responses will be brief written responses or in-class quizzes.

**2. Participation.** Think of your responses as the beginning of classroom discussion. Also, you will participate in other activities in class, including oral presentations, teaching demonstrations, and debates. **Note: Attendance is crucial. You must make up missed class time in an approved fashion—see me.**

**3. Papers responding to articles of your choice from *English Journal* or a related journal.** These should be related to your literature unit/rationale.

**4. Midterm and Final.** These will test your ability to successfully read the course material.

**5. Literature Unit Plan.** More detailed information will be forthcoming. A lesson from your unit will be presented to the class as a teaching demonstration.

**6. Rationale.** You will write an 6-8 page argument paper supporting the goals and texts in your literature unit. Your paper should argue a position regarding your unit focus and support it with evidence published during the last five years. Be sure to refute the opposition as well as support your views.

**7. Young Adult Literature responses and presentations.** You will choose two full-length works of young adult literature, read them, write responses to them, and prepare a two-page hand-out that provides an overview of the work's content and your thoughts about its value for students. The handout should be copied and passed out to classmates. Your second response will begin with group work related to *Reading the World*.

**8. Professional Portfolio.** This will be part of your class portfolio. See below. The portfolio will prepare you for your job search. Set up your Placement File if you have not done so.

**9. Theory/Philosophy of Teaching Literature.** You will write a two-page paper summarizing and analyzing your philosophy of teaching literature, taking into account **axiology, procedure, epistemology, and pedagogy**. We'll talk about these terms.

**10. English Studies Conference Presentation and Response.** We will be presenting our lessons to an audience of students and faculty in April.

**11. Clinical Experiences:** You must complete 10 hours of observation/participation in Language Arts/English classes during this course (30 hours total with English 3401). You may use the form available from the Office of Pre-Clinical Experiences to schedule your visits. In addition you must write a reflective essay based on your observations and participation. This essay should not exceed two pages and should be given to me for verification. You must turn in yellow sheets at the Student Teaching office to receive credit for your hours. I will give you further information about various methods to fulfill this school-wide requirement. **If you do not meet this requirement, you cannot pass this course.**

**Students with Disabilities:** If you have a documented disability and wish to receive academic accommodations, please contact the Coordinator of the Office of Disability Services (581-6583) as soon as possible.

**Plagiarism:** The English Department states, "Any teacher who discovers an act of plagiarism -- 'The appropriation or imitation of the language, ideas, and/or thoughts of another author, and representation of them as one's original work' -- has the right and the responsibility to impose upon the guilty student an appropriate penalty, up to and including immediate assignment of a grade of "F" in the course."

**Attendance:** Please note that attendance is important. You must make up any class time you miss in some way related to English language arts and respond in writing to the event.

**Grades:** Grades will be determined as follows for a total of 100%:

1. Weekly Response Statements (including conference)	10%
2. Participation and attendance	10%
3. <i>English Journal</i> Responses	10%
4. Literature Unit Plan and lesson presentation	15%
5. Rationale	15%
6. Young Adult Literature Responses/Presentations	5%
7. Professional Portfolio	5%
8. Theory/Philosophy of Literature Teaching	10%
9. Midterm	10%
10. Final	10%

**Portfolio for Class work and professional information: Your portfolio will include a TABLE OF CONTENTS and the following:**

1. Course work: responses, literature unit, rationale, English studies conference presentation and response, clinical experience response, literature teaching philosophy/theory.
2. Proof of participation in conference (program copy).
3. Proof of membership in NCTE and/or IATE
4. Resume
5. Letters of Recommendation
6. Other teaching experience and extra-curricular activities related to teaching.
7. Items on checklist I will distribute at beginning of semester.

#### **Grading of Papers:**

Paper grades will be based on the following areas: Audience awareness, organization, development, sentence structure, word choice, grammar/usage/mechanics. The first three areas will be weighted more heavily than the second three (60% vs. 40%).

Literature units will receive a group grade that envelops all elements of a unit (beyond lesson plans). Pay careful attention to long term goals and short term objectives, your view of the students' procedures, assignments, methods of evaluation, and audience.

Presentations will be evaluated according to a rubric I will distribute in class.

## Spring 2004 English 3402 Tentative Course Calendar, Subject to Change

### January

13 Introduction to the course: Read ch. 1 and 2 TETPP ("Principles of Practice") and ("Getting Started: Basics of Unit Design") for Next week.

20 **Typed Response Due** Read ch. 3 ("What Students Know and Schools Assess"), 4 ("Planning Backwards: How Endpoints Suggest Pathways") and 5 ("Setting and Assessing Unit Goals") for Next Week.

27 **Typed Response Due.** Read chapters 6 ("Refining the Unit Focus"), 7 ("Introductory Activities: Gateway to Unit Concepts"), and 8 ("The Construction Zone: Building Toward Unit Goals") for next week.

### February

3 **EJ write-up on lit unit theme due.** Read chapters 9 ("Setting Up Your Classroom"), 10 ("How Ways of Talking Affect Ways of Learning") and 11 ("Multimedia Composing with a Big Tool Kit") for Next Week. Bring in YA Lit to share—prepare for next week's presentations.

10 **YA lit presentations/ Response due. Note: These presentations must be brief-no more than 3 minutes!** Read chapter 12, ("Building Body Biographies"), and Thursday chapters 13 ("Rethinking the Curriculum from a Multicultural Perspective") and 14 ("Rethinking Character Education" for next week.

17 **Typed Response Due.** Read Chapter 15 ("Rethinking Standards for Teaching English"), Last TETPP Chapter ("Theory in Practice"), and TETPP Appendices for next week. Prepare for rationale.

24 **EJ write-up on teaching a text in your unit due.** Library Review/Career Services. Read chapter 5 CM ("Censorship in the Classroom: Fighting Back") and chs. 2 ("The Culturally Deprived American Majority") and 4 ("Expanding the Canon Through Perceptions of Diversity and the American Dream: An Experiment") CM for next week. Prepare for "midterm" over Smagorinsky.

### March

2 **Midterm--Smagorinsky** Continue work on rationales. Begin work on multicultural literature. Collect at least ten journal articles and draft rationale for next week.

9 **Rationale draft due for peer response and for conferences.**

15-19 Spring Break, No Classes! Read chs. 6-8 CM ("Multiethnic Literature for Mainstream Teachers: Another Experiment," "Dealing with Ableism, Ageism, Sexism, and Homophobia: Otherness," and "Brainstorming a New Canon") for March 23

23 **In-class response** Read ch. 11 CM (What the Canon did not Teach us About Learning Styles”) and chs 12 and 14 CM (“Approaches to Teaching Multicultural Literature” and “Interdisciplinary Connections in Teaching Multicultural Literature”) for next week. **Complete revision of Rationale!**

30 **Final draft of Rationales due** Group work—literature unit pairs organized an approaches determined—Talk about Assessing Literature

## **April**

6 **Typed response due** Get into groups by YA chapter You will present your chapter by group and apply its approach to one or more YA work (lit crit). **Read assigned chapters by group in Teaching Reading in HS Text and be prepared to present.**

13 **Teaching Reading in HS Presentations!** Make Final changes on literature units.

20 **Literature Units Due! YA Lit presentations!**

### **Please Note:**

**The English Studies Conference is on Saturday, April 24 from 9-1. You must attend!**

27 **Lesson Presentations. Portfolios Due!**

**Theory/Philosophy of teaching lit due today with professional/course portfolio**

## **Final Exam**

## Teaching Literature Argument Paper / Rationale Assignment

### Audience

Think of your audience as someone who disagrees with at least part of your argument.

### Purpose and Assignment

Write a position paper justifying the teaching of your unit. Examine the elements of your unit critically, take a position, and develop a reasoned argument in support of your position.

### Explanation

A position paper usually contains the following features: well-defined parameters for your unit, clear positions in favor of teaching your unit, a convincing argument with evidence in support of teaching your unit and refuting counter-arguments, and an appropriate tone.

A rationale is a type of argument. As Smagorinsky explains, when writing your rationale, consider the following related questions:

- What concepts are central to the topic of this unit
- Why am I teaching this unit and its concepts?
- What types of justifications am I primarily relying on to support my rationale (psychology/human development, cultural significance, etc.)?
- Within each justification, what are the main claims that can be made about its relevance to the unit I'm proposing (e.g., studying protest literature is important because it helps students understand the role of conscience to social action)?
- For each claim, what kinds of evidence can I provide that would be persuasive to others, and how can I provide a warrant that explains the ways in which the evidence supports my claim?
- What counterarguments can I anticipate against my rationale, and how can I provide a rebuttal for them?
- How can I provide a rationale for each of the texts that my students read in conjunction with the unit focus?

Please see pages 62-65 for further information about writing a rationale for your unit. Here are some further thoughts:

Your rationale should clearly indicate your position (s). You may qualify your claims to accommodate strong opposing arguments, but you should avoid vagueness or indecision. I suggest you declare your position in a thesis statement early in the rationale.

To convince readers, you must also provide sound reasoning and solid evidence in support of your claims. You must also anticipate possible arguments and either accommodate or refute them.

The main points supporting a claim should be not only stated clearly, but also explained and fully developed. You can cite various kinds of evidence in support of a position, including anecdotes, authorities, and statistics.

You also need to acknowledge opposing points of view and accommodate or refute them. Accommodating an opposing argument basically involves admitting that it has validity and qualifying one's own view to account for it. Refuting an opposing argument means trying to show how it is wrong.

Find a tone that adequately expresses your feelings without shutting down communication altogether. Ideally, you gain readers' confidence and respect both by the way you reason and by the language you use.

### **Scope**

This rationale should be from 6-8 pages (short conference length) and should include references to at least eight current sources. To write an effective rationale, limit the topic to manageable proportions.



## Young Adult Literature Presentation/Response

1. Type up a hand-out for your classmates that includes the following:

- A brief summary of the YA work.
- A personal response to the work.
- A discussion of how you would approach the work pedagogically in a secondary (middle or high school) classroom.

Response strategies can include the following: engaging, describing, conceiving, explaining, connecting, interpreting, judging.

You can also organize your discussion in terms four basic sources of knowledge that become perspectives through which to view literature: Textual, Social (drawing on students' own social relationships), Cultural (drawing on students' cultural contexts), and Topical (draws on students' background knowledge of different academic fields or topics).

2. In a presentation of no more than three minutes, introduce students to your work, what you liked or disliked about it, and how you would teach it (or why you would or would not).

## Young Adult Literature Group Response

1. Summarize your chapter's approach
2. Take students through the application of the approach
3. Explain how you would integrate the approach into the classroom (in some way)
4. Respond to the chapter's approach and its application in both personal and intertextual ways.
5. Provide students with a handout with summary information and responses to the approach and its application

Response strategies again can include engaging, describing, conceiving, explaining, connecting, interpreting, and/or judging.

Discussion can also be organized according to for basic sources of knowledge: textual, social, cultural, and/or topical.

1. The unit should revolve around one theme, topic, etc., you will create. Throughout the unit you will have various products students will complete. Include prompts for all of these. Explain what students will gain from the unit's completion. Explain why those gains are important and necessary.

2. The unit should include extensive daily lesson plans that delineate how you will help students complete the tasks and achieve the goals and objectives you have included with your unit. You should thus outline your methods of instruction for each day, describe what you hope students will achieve as a result of the instructional strategies, and explain why you think it's important students achieve those goals and objectives. Use the format with which you are most comfortable—but make sure you are consistent!

3. The unit should also explain what method(s) of evaluation you will use for the assignments, class work, etc., that contribute to students achievement of goals and objectives. Include all rubrics or grading sheets, etc. and describe what methods of responding to student work you feel would be most effective. Explain why you feel they will be most effective. You may also include an overview of your assessment methods in your front matter.

## Response Statements

### **General Comments:**

Each response statement should be at least two-pages typed. They should go beyond summarizing what you have read and actually "respond" to the text you have read. A clear understanding of the reading is of course necessary for a thoughtful response, but responding to questions you have about the content and/or significance of the reading may also lead to sophisticated written reactions.

### **Specific Instructions:**

**A. Highlight and Annotate the reading and/or lecture.**

**B. Summarize the reading or lecture in your book and thoughts.**

**C. Ask Questions like the following and then answer them in your Response Paper:**

1. Examine the assumptions and beliefs you bring to the lecture/reading. How do your beliefs and assumptions coincide with or differ from those of the lecture/text on central issues?

2. How does the background information given in the lecture line up with the text you are reading? What aspects of the literary text you are currently reading seem to parallel those of the historical background? What aspects of the literary text conflict with, call into question, or contradict those brought up in the background reading?

3. What is your initial response to the topic of the lecture/book? Do you agree or disagree with its perspective? Why or why not?

4. What kinds of ideological conflicts underlie the assumptions of the lecture/book?

5. What conflicts is it not dealing with or might it be trying to suppress?

6. Ask questions about your culture and history and that of the reading. How does your culture/history line up with that of the reading? What is your place in your culture/history and how does it compare with what it would be in that of the reading?

8. What myths in our culture can be compared to those of the lecture/text? Which ones could be contrasted with those of the lecture?

9. Explore some of the factors--historical, economic, racial, sexual--that may make you relate to the position of the book/lecture or that distance you from it.